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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses sources specific to Jewish genealogical research and shows how the collection resources of the Israel Genealogical Society (IGS) library have exemplified this. The paper begins with a description of basic genealogical sources available at public, state, and university libraries. Examples of sources unique to Jewish genealogical research are then listed, including Yizkor books, Rabbinical dynastic literature, Holocaust lists and literature, Jewish reference books, journals of various Jewish Genealogical Societies, and the Jewish Genealogical Discussion list. Historical background on the IGS is provided, and the IGS collection is described, including specialized software and information source files, audiovisual materials, and periodicals. Appendices include: (1) a list of Jewish genealogical research World Wide Web sites, (2) a subject index of the IGS genealogical library, including headings for general works, family names, place names, and periodicals; (3) the cover page of the IGS's journal "Sharsharet Hadorot"; and (4) a selected bibliography of research sources relating to Jewish genealogical research, including 25 books and articles, six periodicals, four discussion groups, and five videos. (MES)

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Developing a Jewish genealogy library: the Israel Genealogical Society Library as a case study

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Paper

Genealogical research is as old as the study of man. The Bible offers us an excellent example of recording the family tree in a format accessible to all. As there has not been any updates recently, we are today concerned with the researching of family histories of the more recent past.

Genealogical research techniques and sources are neutral as to religions, cultures and nationalities. They include family interviews, oral history, personal papers and official documentation including birth, death, census, citizenship and tax records. This paper is devoted to the sources specific to Jewish genealogical research and how the collection resources of the IGS library have exemplified this. It is appropriate that we present it here in Israel whose language is that of the Bible which is a source for Jewish genealogical research.

Genealogical libraries originated as part of the local collections of public libraries. Many of the reference queries revolve around family histories and items of local interest. The collections include clippings, monographic material, newspapers, maps and photographs. These collections have evolved into History and Genealogy Sections of public and state libraries. Many collections are available at web sites. In addition, Judaic collections at university libraries have offered another avenue for research. A sampling of the research material exhibited on these web sites reveal a basic core of sources. They include: newspapers, vital records, indices of county, state and national records,

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handbooks and guides, censuses, passenger lists and indices, cemetery records, telephone directories, family histories/trees, periodicals, atlases and online access to the genealogical resources of the LDS church.

All of these are basic to Jewish genealogical research but examples of unique sources would include Yizkor books[1], Rabbinical dynastic literature, Holocaust lists and literature including Yad Vashem's Pages of Testimony database[2]. There are specifically Jewish reference books such as atlases, biographical dictionaries, encyclopedia, newsletters and the journals of the various Jewish Genealogical Societies around the world. Last but not least is the Jewish Genealogical Discussion list (JewishGen) that is an online umbrella organization that includes in its web site information files, databases, archives etc. Without stretching the imagination too much it can be designated as an online Jewish genealogy library of enormous utility and comprehensiveness.

The Israel Genealogy Society was established in 1984 as a result of informal meetings of like-minded researchers of Jewish family history. It immediately issued a bilingual newsletter (Hebrew and English). This has turned into a scholarly journal called "Sharsheret Hadorot" which roughly translates as "Generations". The Society has had monthly meetings that consisted of lectures on genealogical topics. These lectures were published in the Society's periodical. The index for the first 13 volumes was developed from an UNESCO software program and is an excellent bibliographic source. It is a classified list by subject, family names, place names in addition to the standard classification. This periodical along with the small collection of newspaper clippings, family trees and books that were donated to the Society, became the nucleus of a special library devoted to Jewish genealogy.

The Society's beginnings were coincided with the rise in popularity of genealogical research in general and Jewish genealogical researches in particular. This latter development was due to the following factors: the opening up of the Eastern European countries to the West with the ensuing access to archives, the renewed interest in the Holocaust and the subsequent suits for compensation from the Axis countries. These included insurance claims, forced labor payments and stolen property claims both private and communal. Documentation became increasingly important and access to names, and places were essential. The technological advances, which included the fax, Internet and ease of travel, were welcomed accompaniments to family research.

In Israel where there was an ingathering of Jews from around the world, associations were formed based on the city or town of origin[3]. Newsletters, pamphlets and occasional monographic materials were issued and archives established. An example is the Archives of the Jews of Lithuania located in Tel Aviv. Newspapers written in Yiddish, Ladino and other languages in the Diaspora continued publication in Israel. In the early years of the state, they're more than 35 newspapers being printed in as many languages. As you can see, these newspapers represent an important Jewish genealogical source. The Associations developed archives of varying sizes, some of which were incorporated into larger research institutes[4]. In addition to these "landsman" archives, there are municipal, governmental and burial society records, which provide primary documentation for researchers. Public libraries in Israel have had an interesting history, first in the British mandate period and then later after the state were established[5]. In addition to these sources there are the oral history projects connected with the Institute for Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus, Jerusalem. The Jewish National and University Library (JNUL) is a depository library which receives two copies of everything

published in Israel and in addition has an acquisition policy of obtaining books and periodicals of Jewish interest from world wide sources.

Why the need for a specialized Jewish genealogical library with all these sources available in the neighborhood so to speak? This paper hopes to answer that question.

Before the technological revolution made data accessible with the flick of a double click and while the country was developing; there was not the leisure time to visit all these sources. Some of these sources were not cataloged and classified completely, since there was not a pool of professional librarians and archivists or the means to pay them. Individuals tended to collect their own documentation that could contain vital records, clippings, photos, family trees, books, ephemera, maps, and periodicals. Family trees were produced by hand, some in a graphic format, others in book form. The survivors of the towns in East Europe whose Jewish populations were decimated if not completely destroyed during World War II wrote Yizkor books. Family societies were created such as the Jaffe, Horowitz, and Saltiel family organizations. Other examples include the Corcos and Toledano families from Spain as well as those families from Egypt, Greece and North Africa. There is documentation of these families in our library. Family reunions were instituted both here and abroad. Newsletters and other items were produced as a result of these developments. Not all of this material was obtainable at the libraries, institutes and archives mentioned above, so de facto the IGS Library was formed. The Library was begun before the vast amounts of computerized data was available online. This latter development has added exponentially to the value of this genealogical collection.

The founders of the IGS, which is a strictly volunteer organization, attracted people with various interests and abilities. One of them was Reuven Naftali, who devised a software program which could provide computer generated lists organized by the categorization system described above[6]. The material also includes information source files developed especially by Mr. Naftali. They include the following types of research material: articles, clippings, documents, and addresses of contacts. These are arranged by country or SIG (Special Interest Group). This sub-collection has an archival flavor by including data wherever possible on archives. This is a heavily used resource.

The software is a simple one not having the capacity provide a keyword search. A classification scheme such as LC or Dewey hasn't been decided upon and the various schemes developed for Judaic collections is not entirely suitable for genealogical research that extends into many subject areas i.e., geography, law, governmental records of various kinds.

The collection currently has more than 400 items. Audio-visual materials consist of audiotapes of genealogical conferences and videocassettes on various subjects relating to Jewish genealogy. Because of the voluntary nature of the Society and the budgetary restrictions, our acquisitions policy is based on obtaining resources through gifts and purchases when attending genealogical conferences abroad or travelling to archives. The members of the Society can borrow the material and the two volunteer librarians, Mr. Naftali and myself will respond to queries by the membership.

The collection of periodicals is a specialized one being based on an exchange program with Jewish genealogical societies worldwide. Additionally we have bulletins, newsletters from museums, institutes as well as guides that are published periodically by the various archives. Currently, we have close to 100

periodicals. The usefulness of these periodicals lies in the names and families being researched. A large number of Jews immigrated from East and Central Europe to North America, Latin America, Western Europe, Israel and Australia. These journals provide a means of communicating genealogical queries in a format that is readily accessible and inexpensive. That it makes the genealogical world smaller is a side benefit. The journal of the Society," Sharsheret Hadorot", publishes abstracts of this material in English and Hebrew further expanding the reach of this resource.[7]

Does a small, specialized library like the IGS Genealogical Library have a future in this highly technological world? The answer may lie in the virtual library concept. The IGS website currently provides information on the genealogical scene in Israel as well as providing links to computerized archives institutes museums and libraries[8]. As our physical library is located in Jerusalem and not really accessible to the membership at large, a grant proposal was recently under consideration to enable the Society to put the entire contents of our holdings online. It appears that the Internet revolution has occurred at a fortuitous time in enabling the specialized library to be preserved in a differing format. If the Biblioteque National in Paris accomplished this staggering achievement of computerizing their library, it seems only a modest goal for the IGS Library to become a virtual one.

The JGS genealogical library started out as a collection of items revolving around monthly lectures that has expanded as the interest in Jewish genealogy has grown. From being the repository of completed genealogical research, it is now a basic place to begin family research. It provides a starting place for beginning searches that will eventually lead to exploring the archives that exist not only in Israel, but also in all the places that the Jews have ever lived. With the enormous amount of Jewish Genealogical websites developing, the Society and its publication offers guidance in this area. To borrow a term from the Internet I would further characterize the small genealogical library as a link providing similar services the bigger libraries offer but specialized to the subject at hand.

Notes

1. These are memorial books written by former residents of towns or villages (shtetls) in Eastern Europe.

2. Yad Vashem is the museum that memorializes those that perished in the Holocaust. The Pages of Testimony are reports of witnesses and families of those who died. The names listed on these Pages are being computerized.

3. These are called "landsman" societies.

4. See a list of these in Appendix 1

5. See Dov Schidorsky's two articles "The Emergence of Jewish Public Libraries in Nineteenth-Century Palestine" and "Modernization and continuity in Library development in Palestine under the British Mandate (1920-1948) both published in "Libri".

6. Examples of the lists are to be found in Appendix 2. The monographic form is in Hebrew but essentially divides the collection into 3 classifications that

are color-coded. The periodical form is self-explanatory.

7. "Sharharet Hadorot " is the only Jewish genealogical publication issued in Hebrew and English. The major articles are translated in the two languages. See Appendix 3.

8. http://www.isragen.org.il

APPENDIX 1. JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH WEBSITES

Babylonian Jewry Heritage - Or Yehuda
http://www.BabylonianJewry.org.il

Beit Lohamei HaGhetaot - The Ghetto Fighters' Kibbutz Lohamei HaGhetaot
http://www.gfh.org.il
Archives, Library and Museum

Beit Theresienstadt - Kibbutz Givat Hayim Ihud
http://www.cet.ac.il/terezin
Computerized database of prisoners of the Ghetto Terezin

Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People
http://sites.huji.ac.il/archives
The Diamont Collection and family papers from Germany, Holland, Poland and Argentina

Central Zionist Archives
http://www.wzo.org.il/cza
Includes among other items, the 1939 Census of the Jews of Jerusalem, electoral records, and immigration records.

Diaspora Museum (Beit Ha'Tfutsoth) - Tel Aviv
http://www.bh.org.il
Houses the Douglas Goldman Genealogy Center-Dorot

Hebrew University-Dinur Center for the Study of Jewish History
http://www.hum.huji.ac.il/Dinur/

Israel Archives Associations
http://spinoza.tau.ac.il/aa/assoc.htm
Lists the principal archives in Israel and is the home page for the Israel State Archives.

Jewish National and University Library
First stop in Israel for genealogical research.
http://sites.huji.ac.il/jnul

Massua-Institute for the Study of the Holocaust- Kibbutz Tel Yitzhak
http://www.massuah.org
Museum and archive.

Memorial Museum of Hungarian Speaking Jewry - Safed

http://www.hugjewmus.org.il

Yad Vashem - The Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority
http://www.yadvashem.org.il
Includes sites for the following: Pages of Testimony, Int'l Center for Holocaust Studies, Int'l Center for Holocaust Education, World Center for Teaching the Shoah, Nizkor: A Holocaust Remembrance as well as an updated facility that houses the archives and library together.

APPENDIX 2. SUBJECT INDEX OF THE IGS GENEALOGICAL LIBRARY

The data is organized in the following manner: the main subject, which consists of general works, family name or country name, title, author and language. Following are some examples illustrating these categories.

GENERAL WORKS:

A GUIDE TO JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN ISRAEL.

A DICTIONARY OF JEWISH SURNAMES FROM THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE.

ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA

FAQ; FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT JEWISH GENEALOGY

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

GENEALOGICAL RESOURCES IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA

JEWISH GENEALOGY RESEARCH ARTICLES

WHERE ONCE WE WALKED

FAMILY NAMES:

BUTTENWIESER FAMILY TREE

FROM MANCHESTER TO JERUSALEM

GESCHICHTE DES NAMEN MUEHSAM

HISTORY OF THE FAMILY GOLODENZ

HOMBURGER FAMILY FROM KARLSRUHE

JODAIKENS; A LITHUANIAN JEWISH FAMILY IN DISPERSION

REAVIN, REAVIN, NACHMAN GENEALOGY

SARAH & ALEXANDER BERMAN; A FAMILY CHRONICLE

PLACE NAMES:

DISTRIBUTION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION OF THE USSR, 1939

GUIDE TO THE GIRONA JEWRY

HALLE, PARISH REGISTRATION 1936

IZMIR - LIST OF 7300 NAMES OF JEWISH BRIDES & GROOMS

JEWISH ROOTS IN POLAND

NEW JEWISH CEMETERY IN PRAGUE

SOURCES OF JEWISH TURKISH GENEALOGY

TRACING YOUR JEWISH ROOTS IN LONDON

PERIODICALS:

AVOTANYU. JOURNAL. NEW YORK

CHRONICLES. JOURNAL. PHILADELPHIA

DOROT. JOURNAL. NEW YORK

GERACOES. NEWSLETTER. BRAZIL

JEUDISCHE FAMILIENFORSCHUNG. JOURNAL. GERMANY

KOSHER KOALA. NEWSLETTER. SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

LATVIA SIG. JOURNAL. OHIO

MAAJAN DIE QUELLE. NEWSLETTER. ZURICH.

SHEMOT. JOURNAL. GREAT BRITAIN

APPENDIX 3. COVER PAGE OF THE SOCIETY'S JOURNAL "SHARSHARET HADOROT"

Sharsheret Hadorot
JOURNAL OF JEWISH GENEALOGY

Winter 2000 The Israel Genealogical Society Vol. 14 No. 2

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APPENDIX 4. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY: JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

Presented here is a sampling of research sources relating to Jewish genealogical research. This is just to demonstrate the variety of sources and formats. The material available in Hebrew and other languages would at least triple the possibilities .

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Amdur Sack, Sally. *A GUIDE TO JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN ISRAEL*. Teaneck, N.J. Avotaynu Inc. 1995

Barnavi, Eli ed. *AN HISTORICAL ATLAS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE; FROM THE TIME OF THE PATRIARCHS TO THE PRESENT*. New York. Alfred A.

Knopf. 1992

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Dashevskaia, Olga. "Documents on the History of the Jews of St. Petersburg in one Collection in the Russian State Archive". In *JEWS IN EASTERN EUROPE.* Jerusalem. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Centre for Research and Documentation of Eastern European Jewry.Fall 1995. Pp. 88-93

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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JEWISH GENEALOGY VOL. I. Edited by Aruthur Kurzweil and Miriam Weiner. Northvale, N.J. Jason Aronson, Inc. 1991

Gartner, Lloyd P. "Jewish Migrants en route from Europe to North America: Traditions and Realities". *JEWISH HISTORY* Vol. 1. No. 2. Fall, 1986 pp. 49-66

Gold, David.L. "The Jewish Family Names in the *OXFORD DICTIONARY OF SURNAMES". JEWISH LANGUAGE REVIEW* Vol. 7, Pt. A, 1987, pp. 139-145

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"Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages in European Jewish Communities in Palestine and Israel". *ARCHIVUM* Vol. 9, 1959 pp. 101-119

Rendsburg, Gary A. "The Internal Consistency and Historical Reliability of the Biblical Genealogies". *VETUS TESTAMENTUM* Vol. 40. No. 2 April 1990 pp. 185-206

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Schidorsky, Dov. "The Emergence of Jewish Public Libraries in Nineteenth-Century Palestine". *LIBRI*. Vol. 32 No. March 1982 pp. 1-40

---------- "Modernization and continuity in Library development in Palestine under the British Mandate (19201948). *LIBRI*. Vol. 45, 1995 pp. 19-30

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PERIODICALS:

EUROPEAN LEGACY

JEWISH HISTORY

JEWISH LANGUAGE REVIEW

JUDAICA LIBRARIANSHIP

PAPERS IN JEWISH DEMOGRAPHY

STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY JEWRY

DISCUSSION GROUPS:

GENLOC (GENEALOGY & LOCAL HISTORY SERVICES DISCUSSION GROUP)

HASAFRAN (THE LIBRARIAN)

JEWISHGEN

LIBRARIANS SERVING GENEALOGISTS

VIDEOS:

ELLIS ISLAND

GOLDEN LAND

NOBODY'S BUSINESS

ROUTES TO ROOTS

SALTIEL FAMILY (HEBREW)

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